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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report describes the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean during the period from July 2007 to June 2008.

The Centre celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2007. During the reporting period, it undertook an extensive review of its past and present programme of activities with a view to reaffirming the identity of the Centre as a specialized regional centre for the promotion and execution of disarmament activities, in accordance with its mandate and in compliance with requests from Member States throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region.

To achieve better synergies among its activities, meet the pressing priorities of the United Nations and address the requirements of both donors and Member States of the region, the Centre adjusted its organizational structure and operational approach to the evolving and increasing requests of Member States in the region.

In this connection, the Centre organized its practical disarmament activities and the promotion of disarmament and confidence-building measures under four thematic programmes, namely: disarmament instruments and policymaking; public security; regional security and confidence-building measures; and disarmament advocacy.

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The Centre also concluded three of its most significant donor agreements to date and delivered increased technical assistance to States on issues related to illicit firearms trafficking, which has a strong impact on public security and which has been identified by Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean as their most pressing security concern.

In addition, in support of the "one United Nations system" policy, the Centre continued to promote joint efforts with United Nations entities and/or international and non-governmental organizations to enhance the capacity of States in addressing their disarmament and development needs, specifically the issue of armed violence.

In the absence of assessed contributions from the United Nations regular budget, provision of voluntary financial contributions, in particular for core funding, is of crucial importance for the operation and activities of the Centre. This situation continues to have an impact on the sustainability and quality of activities and services provided by the Centre.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/49, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean with all necessary support, within existing resources, so that it may carry out its programme of activities in accordance with its mandate and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and covers the Centre's activities from July 2007 to June 2008. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Centre for the biennium 2006-2007 is contained in the annex to the report.

II. Functioning and mandate

3. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, located in Lima, was established in 1987, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/60 J.

4. The Centre, which is part of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for the initiatives and other activities of the Member States in the region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament and for the promotion of economic and social development.

5. The Centre's assistance is divided into four thematic programme areas, which reflect the needs expressed by Member States in the region, relevant international disarmament instruments, as well as the vision and programme of work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The four programmes are: public security; regional security and confidence-building measures; disarmament advocacy; and disarmament instruments and policymaking.

III. Activities

6. During the period under review, the Centre celebrated its twentieth anniversary and undertook an extensive review of its past and present programme of activities. The review reaffirmed the identity of the Centre as a specialized regional centre for the promotion and execution of disarmament activities, in accordance with its mandate (see resolution 41/60 J) and in compliance with requests from Member States throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region.

7. Also during the reporting period, the Centre focused its activities on three main areas of work. Firstly, the Centre continued to provide, upon request, public security assistance to Member States in the region and specifically developed standardized tools to enhance capacity-building activities in this area. The public security initiatives were carried out within the framework of three major donor agreements with the European Union, the Swedish International Development Agency, and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

8. With the financial support from the European Union, the Swedish International Development Agency and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Centre's initiatives included the expansion of its flagship training the trainers course on firearms investigative techniques, which benefited more than 1,000 law enforcement officials from 7 countries in combating the illicit trafficking of firearms. Moreover, close to 20,000 firearms were taken out of circulation in the context of the Centre's technical assistance provided to the Government of Peru for the destruction of decommissioned and surplus weapons. The Centre also provided technical assistance to the Governments of Paraguay and Uruguay for efficient stockpile management, which significantly reduced the risks of explosions or related incidents, thus providing a safer environment for communities living in proximity to stockpile facilities in the two countries.

9. Secondly, the Centre supported the disarmament advocacy efforts of the Office for Disarmament Affairs by promoting international disarmament instruments at the regional level. As a result of the awareness-raising and advocacy workshops that the Centre organized with its partners, there was increased adherence by Member States in the region to disarmament instruments such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was ratified by the Bahamas, Barbados and Colombia.

10. Thirdly, the Centre continued to support efforts throughout the region to link disarmament issues to broader development challenges. Specifically, in cooperation with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Centre facilitated the organization of a seminar where States of the Central American subregion discussed concrete policy responses to armed violence.

11. In carrying out its activities, the Centre liaised and collaborated with the Governments of the region through their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, as well as with Ministries of the Interior, Public Safety, Health and Education, and with international development and aid agencies. The Centre also coordinated and cooperated with agencies of the United Nations system and regional organizations with respect to a number of activities within the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) Mechanism, thus facilitating inter-agency planning and strengthening the ability to deliver as "one United Nations system". Furthermore, the Centre's assistance programmes were integrated into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks throughout the region, specifically in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The majority of activities within this framework were aimed at integrating disarmament and development issues into public security assistance measures in the field.

12. The Centre bolstered its strategic partnerships with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNDP and the Organization of American States (OAS) through joint public security initiatives. New partnerships were forged with the Latin American and Caribbean Community of Police Intelligence, the Police Community of America and the World Customs Organization. The Centre collaborated with these three organizations to promote regional information exchange and best practices on firearms-related issues.

13. Finally, the Centre worked closely with civil society organizations to promote and integrate disarmament issues into the development agenda of Caribbean, Central and South American States, in particular in the area of armed violence.

A. Assisting in the implementation of disarmament instruments

14. The Latin American and Caribbean region has been at the forefront of efforts to establish and implement arms control and disarmament instruments aimed at addressing pressing security challenges facing the region. In this regard, the Centre responded to requests by regional Member States in relation to information exchange and capacity-building of their governmental representatives on relevant disarmament instruments.

15. The Centre focused its efforts during the reporting period on the promotion of three specific international disarmament instruments, as described below.

1. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

16. The Centre and the provisional technical secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization focused their joint advocacy efforts to promote the ratification of the Treaty on Caribbean States and consulted with three countries, namely, the Bahamas, Barbados and Colombia. Such efforts resulted in the ratification of the Treaty by the Bahamas on 26 November 2007, Barbados on 14 January 2008 and Colombia on 29 January 2008. Nine countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region have ratified the Treaty since the initiation of the joint advocacy efforts in 2000-2001.

17. A total of 29 of the 33 States in the Latin American and Caribbean region have signed the Treaty, while 28 States have so far ratified it.

2. Convention on Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

18. The Office for Disarmament Affairs, with the financial support of the European Union and in collaboration with the Government of the Dominican Republic, co-organized a seminar in Santo Domingo in March 2008 to promote accession to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons by States in the region. This is within the framework of European Union joint action in support of the universalization of the Convention. In the region, Amended Protocol II, which addresses the humanitarian concerns posed by anti-personnel landmines, is of particular interest to Member States as they conclude their anti-personnel mine clearance efforts.

19. During the seminar, the Government of the Dominican Republic announced that it had submitted its instruments of ratification to the United Nations, while the representatives of Suriname and Haiti pledged that their respective Governments would accede to the Convention.

3. International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument)

20. The Centre provided organizational support to the regional International Tracing Instrument workshop co-organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Government of Brazil, in coordination with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2008. The workshop, which was supported by the European Union, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Norway, aimed at promoting the effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument and provided an opportunity for States to familiarize themselves with the Instrument, its provisions and the tools available to facilitate its implementation, such as the weapons electronic tracing system of the International Criminal Police Organization.

21. The organization of the workshop contributed to the joint efforts of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the European Union to raise awareness about the effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument by presenting participants with actual tracing cases and best practices on tracing procedures in the field, using examples from one of the cities in the region that faces the largest demand for tracing firearms owing to the high number of crimes involving the illicit movement of weapons and other related crimes.

B. Maximizing public security

22. Addressing armed violence and enhancing public security have been identified by States of the Latin American and Caribbean region as the most pressing security concern. Illicit firearms trafficking fuels the violence associated with drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime, and threatens public security. Indexes of armed violence caused by firearms are continuously on the rise, in particular in large urban centres and despite concerted and earnest efforts by States, the Latin American and Caribbean region continues to rank as one of the most violent regions in the world.

23. In an effort to address this trend, States in the region have supported the creation of a Department of Public Security at OAS. Several practical disarmament-related national initiatives were also undertaken by States during the period under review, such as increased training of the law enforcement community, greater engagement in the destruction of firearms, ammunition and explosives, tightening border controls, creating multisectoral firearms commissions, conducting awareness-raising campaigns on the impact of firearms misuse and reviewing and harmonizing national firearms legislation with relevant regional and international instruments.

24. In response to the heightened demand from Member States for assistance in implementing disarmament-related measures specifically associated with public security concerns, the Centre undertook a significant number of activities during the reporting period to strengthen national capacities, provide networking opportunities and enhance infrastructures for national and international coordination and cooperation, as described below.

1. Firearms instruments

25. The second Meeting of States Parties to the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials was held in Mexico City on 20 and 21 February 2008, which coincided with the tenth anniversary of the signing of Convention.

26. On this occasion, the Centre launched the second edition of the comparative legislative study, developed in cooperation with OAS, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNDP, which reviews the national firearms legislation of 30 countries and compares them with regional and global instruments. This supplementary reference tool is used by members of parliaments in the region to help revise national legislation so as to be in harmony with regional and international firearms instruments.

27. The Centre provides legal assistance to States in the region and, in this regard, the comparative study serves as the main reference tool in providing them with a standardized analysis of their respective national firearms legislation. During the reporting period, the Centre provided such assistance to six Member States in the region, namely, Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama and Peru. This effort assisted States with ongoing congressional debates on the reform of their firearms laws to include various requirements contained in international firearms instruments in the draft national bills under review. Additional requests for assistance from other States in the region have also been received.

2. Weapons destruction and stockpile management

28. Pursuant to resolution 2108 (XXXV-O/05) on the proliferation of and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, of the General Assembly of OAS, the organization and the Centre were requested to develop courses on best practices in weapons destruction and stockpile management. In this connection, a national workshop was organized in Lima in November 2007 for 60 law enforcement officials involved in the verification and destruction of seized, decommissioned and surplus firearms. The workshop was followed by the destruction of 7,771 firearms on 14 December 2007, as well as the destruction of an additional 7,000 weapons on 6 June 2008 and of 13,751 weapons on 30 June 2008. A total of 42,000 weapons are expected to be destroyed during this ongoing sequential destruction process.

29. As a result of the workshop, the Government of Peru decided to adopt the methodology provided by the Centre in future national destruction events to be carried out by the Ministry of the Interior. Similarly, the Government of Paraguay, using the methodology provided by the Centre, organized several firearms destruction events.

30. Finally, the security of a number of firearms storage facilities throughout the region has been improved as a result of the technical assistance on stockpile management provided by the Centre to States. During the reporting period, the Centre completed assistance packages to the Governments of Paraguay and Uruguay in order to improve the security of firearms, ammunition and explosives stockpile facilities. Guidelines were also provided on the safe and secure integrated management of such installations.

3. National capacity-building

31. To more effectively combat illicit firearms trafficking, the law enforcement community in the region continued to build its knowledge and strengthen its operational skills with the technical support of the Centre and its partners. During the reporting period, over 1,100 officials from seven countries in the region received standardized training on investigative techniques and regional information exchange through the training the trainers courses, which were organized by the Centre in Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Paraguay, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

32. Also during the reporting period, the scope of the training the trainers course was widened to include border management and customs investigations. Such courses were organized for customs and border agencies in the Dominican Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in November and December 2007 and June 2008. In the case of the Dominican Republic, members of the Cuerpo Espesializado de Seguridad Fronteriza (Specialized Land Border Security Body (CESFRONT)) participated in the three courses organized by the Centre. In the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the combined command post course, hosted by the national customs agency (SENIAT), was attended by custom agents.

33. Evidence of the positive impact of these courses emerged as States began to modify operational practices in the field. The courses have facilitated intra-State cooperation and increased national efficiency in addressing problems arising from illicit firearms trafficking by bolstering the collective efforts of national networks of officials from the police, customs, the judiciary, the armed forces and other entities. These training courses have also enhanced joint national and bilateral activities both at the training and operational levels.

34. The Centre has also provided assistance to States in institutionalizing a permanent combined command post, responsible for the coordination and execution of the training the trainers courses. The concept of nationally owned combined command posts has been crucial to the sustainability and application of course methodologies. During the reporting period, the work of such posts was facilitated with the establishment of permanent training facilities in Brazil, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Uruguay.

35. The Centre carried out a first-of-its-kind firearms baseline analysis to assess the current firearms situation in Jamaica and to identify the mechanisms already in place to tackle this multifaceted issue. The study provided the Ministry of Justice and National Security of Jamaica, the Defence Forces and Parliamentarians with specific information to be included in the training the trainers courses. The findings of the study also feed into other activities related to the implementation of the Jamaican national security policy programme, supported by UNDP and the Centre, by facilitating the design of policies and activities to address the threats that firearms pose to the country's stability and security.

4. Regional information exchange

36. During the period under review, the Centre convened a regional information exchange course in Bogotá, in April 2008. The objective of the course was to enable the regional law enforcement community to exchange best practices on transparency measures, intelligence gathering and cooperation aimed at combating illicit firearms

trafficking. The course, organized with the assistance of the Colombian Directorate of Police Intelligence (DIPOL), benefited from the substantive cooperation with the office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Colombia, INTERPOL, the Latin American and Caribbean Community of Police Intelligence, the Police Community of America and the World Customs Organization.

37. The course was instrumental in making possible bilateral consultations on new working methods between countries, as it offered an opportunity to agree on specific practical issues at the working level. A more long-term impact of the course was the creation of a best practices manual based on the experiences and guidance of the representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States of America, as well as European law enforcement entities. The manual is expected to be used in the region throughout 2008 and discussed again among these entities during 2009. Discussions on how to develop this first cooperation and coordination initiative into a recurrent regional meeting have already started.

5. Working with civil society

38. During the reporting period, the Centre contributed to strengthening the link between civil society, parliamentarians and governmental agencies in addressing national threats posed by firearms trafficking by organizing several capacity-building workshops for these distinct groups, with the participation of the media in some cases. The joint workshops resulted in the training of 272 participants in Bolivia and Paraguay. The objective of these activities was to identify sustainable solutions to public security threats, to exchange best practices and, most significantly, to set the stage for future joint actions on specific citizen security initiatives by providing national authorities and non-governmental organizations with an opportunity to translate proposals into public policy.

39. In Jamaica, the Centre and the UNDP office joined forces in a concerted effort to assist the Government in the elaboration and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to reduce armed violence and curb illicit firearms trafficking. This effort entailed organizing a series of courses and consultative workshops for civil society organizations and community leaders in the country. Week-long events were held in November and December 2007, as well as in May 2008, in the two major urban centres of Kingston and Montego Bay. The Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) in Jamaica integrated human security and gender elements into its curricula, while the University of the West Indies was instrumental in the substantive organization of the events. The successful partnership between the Centre and WINAD will serve as a model for the Centre to carry out further firearms initiatives in the Caribbean region.

C. Further integration of disarmament and development matters

1. Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

40. The Centre, in collaboration with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of UNDP and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, organized an awareness-raising seminar in La Antigua, Guatemala, from 28 to 30 April 2008, to exchange information on best practices with respect to the implementation of the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and

Development, and the subsequent 2007 Regional Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development.

41. The seminar focused on how to translate the Geneva Declaration into practical actions in the field and provided an opportunity for States from the region, as well as international organizations and civil society, to present some of the actions undertaken within the scope of the Declaration.

42. Two concrete outcomes emerged from the seminar. The first was the emergence of a regional consensus on the need to move forward and organize a follow-up event to discuss more concrete activities related to the Declaration, as well as possible ways to monitor and evaluate such activities. The second outcome was the need expressed by participants for the development of an inventory of past and existing activities in the region, which could serve as a useful tool to better understand the practical aspects of implementing the Declaration. Both of these issues are expected to be discussed in more detail at the 2008 Geneva Declaration Summit Meeting, scheduled to take place in Geneva on 12 September.

2. Armed violence

43. The current reporting period marks the conclusion in Costa Rica of the joint assistance project with UNDP entitled "Integral Approach to Armed Violence as a Public Health Problem". The project, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency, was instrumental in assisting the Government of Costa Rica in the elaboration of its National Plan for Violence Prevention and Promotion of Social Peace 2007-2010. The Centre collaborated with national authorities in the design of tailor-made initiatives in four selected cantons of the country (San José, Limón, San Carlos and Garabito) where the Government, UNDP and other entities had agreed to invest in prevention measures owing to evolving security needs.

44. Perhaps the most significant impact of this assistance was its contribution to the consolidation of the Costa Rican multisectoral national firearms commission. The project also played a catalytic role in encouraging different national actors to broaden their approach to armed violence issues and, in particular, to integrate health issues into public security activities. This constituted a shift in perception, on the part of both the Government and the society at large, on how to tackle the problems of armed violence. Moreover, the assistance expanded the relationship between various governmental and United Nations entities delivering as a "one United Nations system", thus contributing to a coherent and sustainable United Nations involvement in the country.

D. Working towards mutual confidence

45. In addition to the national and transnational security issues posed by crime, illicit drugs and insurgencies, the region still witnesses significant State-to-State tensions. It is reported that in 2007, States of the region spent more than US$ 40 billion on purchases of weapons. The need to decrease military spending was recently addressed by the President of Peru, Alan García Pérez, during the Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, held in Lima on 16 and 17 May 2008, as he called upon States to limit their military spending and redirect funds to meet the Millennium Declaration Goals.

46. Taking into account these concerns, the Centre has assisted States in the initial phases of the elaboration of national defence white papers, which serve to improve the security sector and enhance joint regional cooperation and assistance among neighbouring States. The Centre has also supported activities aimed at strengthening regional coordination for the prevention of biological and chemical weapons attacks.

1. Bioterrorism

47. In an effort to facilitate confidence-building measures, transparency and information exchanges, the Centre facilitated the organization of a training course for national officials on the prevention of bioterrorism and rapid reaction in the event of chemical and biological weapons attacks in seven countries in the region. The capacity-building course was conducted by INTERPOL in Lima from 7 to 11 April 2008.

48. The Centre's facilitating role in this process constituted a clear example of its effective role in building the capacity of and encouraging cooperation among the countries of the region.

2. Chemical Weapons Regional Assistance and Protection Network

49. During the reporting period, the Centre concluded its cooperation with the Government of Peru and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the development of a Chemical Weapons Regional Assistance and Protection Network, consisting of an online platform to gather information related to a country's capabilities, including services and equipment for protection in the event of a chemical weapons attack. The platform, initially envisaged as a regional network, will be employed by the National Council for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (Consejo nacional para la Prohibición de las Armas Químicas (CONAPAQ)) in Peru as a national assistance and protection information tool.

3. Defence white papers

50. The Centre provided assistance to the Government of the Dominican Republic in the drafting of a project proposal to elaborate its first defence white paper. The proposal, which has been submitted to interested donors, includes the use of the Centre's standardized guidelines and envisages the participation of parliamentarians and civil society in the process. This assistance promotes the standardization of defence policies and structures throughout the region and ensures greater transparency, both nationally and regionally.

E. Related activities

1. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

51. The Centre, in collaboration with the Swedish National Defence College, organized two disarmament, demobilization and reintegration courses in Brazil (26-28 May 2008) and Peru (29-30 May and 2 June 2008), respectively. The courses targeted military and law enforcement personnel, national instructors of future peacekeeping personnel, as well as non-governmental organizations. Using the 2006 Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards developed by

the United Nations system and partners, the College lectured on the Standards framework. The Centre was responsible for lectures introducing international disarmament instruments and best practices methodologies for weapons destruction.

52. It is worth noting that this was the first time, in both countries, that the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards were included in pre-mission training. The courses also presented an opportunity for the Centre to facilitate bilateral cooperation between the College and countries in the region for general peacekeeping training.

2. Peace education

53. The Centre concluded two technical assistance projects aimed at disseminating peacebuilding messages in Peru. For the fourth consecutive year, the Centre and a consortium of civil society partners led by Transparencia, were active in organizing *pasacalles*. In this event, children and youngsters from across the country come together to promote a "culture of peace" and civic values during the National Day festivities celebrated on 28 July 2007 in Peru. This nationwide project brings together municipal authorities, school district representatives and students.

54. The Centre also invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to participate in this event, which encouraged a fuller participation from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education in the 2007 *pasacalles*. Together, all these institutions coordinated actions with a view to institutionalizing the celebration of the *pasacalles* to make them a sustainable activity in the coming years.

55. The Centre's activities to promote peace education also included co-sponsoring, with UNESCO and the United Nations Information Centre in Peru, the second International Peace and Development Education Workshop organized by the Instituto de Fomento de una Educación de Calidad (Institute to Promote Quality Education (EDUCA)) from 6 to 8 October 2007. The workshop brought together community leaders and educators from across the region and contributed to consolidating a network of over 1,200 participants involved in teaching peace and development concepts to children. The workshop raised awareness of the need to integrate disarmament as one of the themes in peace education materials and initiatives.

IV. Staffing, financing and administration

56. The extensive review of the Centre's past and present programme of activities, referred to in paragraph 6 above, resulted in the elaboration of a four-year strategic plan for the period 2008-2011, which reaffirmed the identity of the Centre as a specialized regional centre for the promotion and execution of disarmament activities.

57. The strategic plan 2008-2011 also defined the four thematic areas of assistance and programming referred to in paragraph 5 above, namely, promotion of disarmament instruments and policymaking, public security, regional security and confidence-building, and disarmament advocacy. The areas of assistance identified in the strategic plan derive primarily from a widely perceived need to address the increase in the proliferation and transfers of illicit small arms and light weapons

throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region, which has resulted in a substantial increase in violence and insecurity in many States. The four areas are also based upon broadly accepted principles of international cooperation and the requirement to provide a corpus of integral tools and mechanisms to enable States to address the multifaceted security problems facing the region.

58. In parallel to the strategic review, the reporting period marked the end of important donor-funding cycles and long-term projects. At the request and recommendation of the Centre's donors, senior advisors assisted the Director of the Centre in the development of monitoring tools and in carrying out impact evaluations upon the conclusion of assistance programmes to States.

59. As a result of both the strategic review and the recommendations of donor evaluations, the Centre revised its human resources structure to fully implement its strategic plan.

60. The strategic plan 2008-2011 calls for the reprofiling of existing positions, as well as the creation of new functions. Such measures will ensure that the Centre continues to build its disarmament expertise in order to better serve regional disarmament needs. In this connection, four Associate Expert positions are currently available at the Centre. Filling these positions will greatly contribute to strengthening the Centre's human resources capacity.

61. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/60 J, the Centre was established on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions made by Member States and interested organizations for its core and programme activities. During the reporting period, voluntary contributions to the Centre's trust fund were received in the amount of $1,272,756.[1] The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom, as well as the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, for their generous financial contributions to and support of the activities of the Centre.

62. The timely provision of the annual financial contribution to the Centre from the Government of Peru is essential to ensure its continued operation. To date, the Centre has received Peru's committed contribution for 2007. The Secretary-General urges the host country's Government to continue to honour its commitment to provide financial and overall support to the Centre. Information on the status of the Trust Fund for the Centre for the biennium 2006-2007 is contained in the annex to the present report.

63. Complimentary funding in the amount of $342,536[2] was also made available for the Centre's activities ($108,566 from the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of

[1] For 2007: Mexico $5,000; Panama $1,000; Spain $269,100; Turkey $20,000; United Kingdom $222,401.38; and for 2008: Colombia $2,500; Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization $45,844.92; Guyana $1,014.77; Peru $30,000; Sweden $660,894.97; and United Kingdom $15,000.

[2] For 2007: $51,500 from the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures (CASA); and $23,167 from the regular budget for official development assistance for security upgrades; for 2008: $57,066 from the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures (CASA and International Tracing Instrument); $205,828 from the Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and International Tracing Instrument); and $4,975 from the Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme (CASA database).

Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures; $205,828 from the Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities; $4,975 from the Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme and $23,167 from the regular budget of the Office for Disarmament Affairs for security upgrades). Through cost-sharing and in kind contributions by other United Nations agencies, as well as other governmental entities, the work of the Centre was made possible in 11 States, namely Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude for these complementary contributions in support of the activities of the Centre.

64. In support of the new strategic plan, the Centre and the Swedish International Development Agency signed a three-year strategic partnership agreement, committing financial resources for the pursuit of public security initiatives, including the establishment of three core programme staff positions. The agreement also reflects the Agency's long-term practice to support core staff positions so as to ensure the sustainability of the Centre. These positions include that of the Deputy Director, the Executive Coordinator and the Special Assistant.

65. Despite such positive developments, there is still a need for core funding. In particular, with the completion of a number of specific projects funded by donors, the challenge for the Centre will be to attract new funding to sustain its core staff and core programmatic expertise. Therefore, Member States may wish to consider alternative means of ensuring stable core funding. This would allow the Centre to focus on seeking funding for projects related to strategic regional disarmament issues. Lack of the necessary core financial resources could seriously hinder the Centre's ability to efficiently carry out its mandate and respond to the increasingly diversified and numerous requests from States.

V. Observations and conclusions

66. The Centre has adjusted its organizational structure and operational approach with the adoption of the new strategic plan 2008-2011 in order to respond, in a rapid, flexible and cost-effective manner, to the ever-increasing and varying nature of requests made by States.

67. During the period under review, the Centre's main achievement was in strengthening cooperation within the regional law enforcement community, as evidenced by the notable increase in information-sharing activities, the adoption of standardized best practices and the establishment of permanent coordination entities in the context of activities undertaken by the Centre and its partners. Complementing the Centre's activities in this area, States and civil society organizations in the region made a determined commitment to enhance coordination and standardize training in the prevention of illicit firearms trafficking, with the understanding that such trafficking exacerbates the violence associated with terrorism, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

68. These achievements were made possible through the indispensable ownership and support of Member States, in particular those from the region, generous contributions from donor countries, as well as the Centre's strengthened partnerships with regional and intergovernmental organizations, and civil society.

69. Voluntary contributions, earmarked for specific activities, are essential for maintaining the Centre's proposed programme of activities. Nevertheless, core funding for the operation of the Centre is of equal importance to ensure ongoing progress in programme implementation in the areas of peace, disarmament and development.

70. The Secretary-General calls for the continued support and cooperation of Member States and organizations to sustain the effective operation of the Centre.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the biennium 2006-2007

(United States dollars)

Fund balance, 31 December 2005	698 274
Income, 1 January 2006-31 December 2007	
Voluntary contributions*	3 236 544
Interest income	161 421
Other/miscellaneous income	147 077
Subtotal	**4 243 316**
Expenditures 1 January 2006-31 December 2007	2 992 370
Fund balance, 31 December 2007	**1 250 946**

Note: Information is based on the statement of income and expenditure for the biennium 2006-2007 ending 31 December 2007. During the period from 1 January to 30 June 2008, additional contributions totalling $755,255 were received from Colombia ($2,500), Guyana ($1,015), Peru ($30,000), Sweden ($660,895), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ($15,000); and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization ($45,845).

* 2006: Colombia ($4,143); Guyana ($1,020); Mexico ($5,000); Panama ($1,000); Peru ($60,000); Sweden ($507,731); the United Kingdom ($435,700); and the European Commission ($41,506).
2007: Colombia ($2,286); Mexico ($5,000); Panama ($1,000); Spain ($269,100); Sweden ($569,375); Turkey ($20,000); the United Kingdom ($455,293); and the European Commission ($858,390).